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INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 6997  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2006

#### In Today's Papers

Investigation of General Buyukanit  
All papers: On Monday, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and the Chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) Hilmi Ozkok met to discuss the complaint filed by the Van prosecutor against Land Forces Commander General Yasar Buyukanit for trying to influence the judiciary by protecting a non-commissioned officer, Ali Kaya, who is suspected of having been involved in the Semdinli bombings. The bombing of a bookstore in Semdinli on November 9 and the ensuing protests claimed six lives and left several people injured. The prosecutor has also accused Buyukanit of involvement in organized crime and forgery during his tenure in the region between 1997 and 2000.  
The prosecutor's file says that the Semdinli incidents were aimed at undermining confidence in the government.

General Ozkok complained to Erdogan about a systematic campaign to wear out the military, and said that the complaint "went too far." All accusations against military officials serving in Semdinli are based on the testimony of a single witness, according to Ozkok. Sabah claims that Erdogan and Ozkok have agreed in principle to send back the complaint and initiate legal action against the prosecutor.

General Buyukanit, known for his hard line stance against terrorism, is to replace General Ozkok as the chief of TGS in August 2006. The ruling AK Party denied claims that the government wanted to block Buyukanit from taking the TGS post. The Prime Minister's Spokesman Akif Beki told the press that the complaint against Buyukanit was beyond the government's power, and that it relates to the judiciary. Main opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal accused the AKP government of manipulating the judiciary in a "plot" against the military. CHP Hakkari lawmaker Esat Canan, on the other

hand, defended the prosecutor, saying that he had done his job.

#### Testimonies of Guantanamo Captives

Milliyet, Vatan, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Yeni Safak, Zaman cite international wires to report on the testimony of a Tajik prisoner who was handed over by Pakistanis who are "selling people for \$10,000 each." Papers also report that one Saudi and one Turk were arrested because they were wearing Casio F-19W watches, which, according to the US, al-Qaida uses to make bombs.

#### Turks Join US Army to Become Citizens

Milliyet, Sabah, Vatan, Radikal and others report on Romina Sidi, a Turk from Izmir who is currently serving in US military in Iraq. She had gone to the US for a better education and joined the Air Force when she wanted to become a citizen. "I joined the military after September 11 to fight against terrorism," Sidi said. Eighty-one Turks are serving in the US military.

#### EU Delegation Visits Turkish Cyprus

Milliyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman and others: Turkish Cypriot "Prime Minister" Ferdi Sabit Soyer met with the visiting contact group of the European Parliament in Lefkosa on Monday. "Turkish Cypriot people have a right to meet with the world. We must be helped to integrate with the world and to advance our economy," Soyer said, recalling that "President" Talat has sent a letter to UN Secretary General Annan, expressing Turkish Cypriots' willingness to begin negotiations on the basis of the UN-backed peace plan for reunification. On Monday, a small group of Turkish Cypriots protested against the EP contact group for

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referring to Turkish Cyprus as "the community living in the north" before traveling to the Turkish sector. Soyer shrugged off the protests, saying that "chauvinists create such problems on both sides."

#### Dervis: Overvalued TL Threatens Turkish Economy

Zaman, Cumhuriyet and others: Kemal Dervis, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Administrator, said that overvalued Turkish lira is a threat against the economy. Dervis told CNN-Turk on Monday that Turkey cannot handle the "extreme liquidity" in the world alone. Hot money inflow overvalues the currency, limits competitive power of consumers, and is harmful in the long term, according to Dervis. He continued, "We must reduce the hot money inflow. The state should intervene in the markets. There are foreign exchange and monetary policy problems in Turkey." Dervis also stated that Turkey should try to accomplish a growth rate of over 5 percent in order not to face any employment problems.

#### 3 Policemen Killed in Batman; Iran Extradites 7 PKK Terrorists

All papers report three policemen were killed and four others were injured in a PKK terrorist attack in the southeastern province of Batman. Meanwhile, Iran extradited seven members of the PKK to Turkey following an operation against the terrorists in the Kalarash region near the Turkish border. Diplomatic sources said that in late February, the two countries have agreed on security cooperation for the first time since 1937.

#### Commentary on International Issues

In mainstream Hurriyet, Hadi Uluengin notes that President Bush's recent trip to Asia demonstrated that the "global war against terrorism continues to play a vital role in the formation of US strategy." Uluengin believes that the move toward making India a strategic partner, a "policy, which is based on favoring India as a counter to China, will help to increase anti-Americanism as well as strengthen China even more," and concludes that "in the aftermath of 9/11, the US made a policy mistake by isolating the Islamic world and

President Bush is now repeating this mistake by putting China in the rival category."

Sami Kohen writing in mainstream Milliyet believes that the time has come to "expect an indication of responsible statesmanship from Hamas." He believes that although Hamas "still has not indicated whether will they take advice from Ankara and Moscow, or lean toward the Iranian rhetoric, it is right to expect them to do so since this is exactly what the Palestinian administration wants to see."

Writing on the situation in Iraq, Haluk Ulman commented in the daily Dunya that confusion is the dominant theme: "Sunnis are against Jafari but also support his views on the federal system; the Bush administration collaborated with the Shiites in the beginning but currently Washington is disturbed by the possibility of Shiite rule in Iraq because of Iran. The US, albeit belatedly, realized that Iraqi Shiites will eventually get close to Iran. Turkey should stand in an equal distance to all the Iraqi sides until the uncertainties are over."

TV Highlights  
NTV (8 a.m)

Domestic News

- Prime Minister Erdogan and the Chief of the General Staff

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General Ozkok met to discuss the complaint filed by Van prosecutor against Land Forces Commander General Buyukanit.

- Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul will travel to Vienna on Tuesday for a meeting with the EU Troika to discuss Cyprus and Middle Eastern issues.

International News

- Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said Iraq will eliminate the PKK presence in northern Iraq once Iraqi forces take full control of security across the country.

- President Talabani said Iraq's first permanent post-Saddam Hussein parliament will convene on March 12.

- John Bolton, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, has warned that Iran faces "tangible and painful consequences" unless Tehran halts its nuclear program.

- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Muhammad al-Baradei opened the Vienna meeting over Iran's nuclear activities by suggesting there is still room for talks before reporting Tehran to UN Security Council.

- Amnesty International (AI) has condemned in a report the detention of prisoners in Iraq without trial. AI said torture is continuing, and called for changes to the treatment of detainees by the US, UK and Iraqi authorities.

Economy News

- State Minister for economy, Ali Babacan said the government would stick to its monetary policies and the fight against inflation.

- A World Bank report warns that current deficit in Turkey would become difficult to control with rapid growth and high energy prices.

WILSON